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ABSTRACT

To accomplish the objectives of the Rural Education, Disadvantaged Youth research project, referred to as Project REDY, the research staff members first attempted to develop a close working relationship with selected disadvantaged rural families through family interviews. Immediately following each interview, the interviewers tape recorded their impressions and observations of the home surroundings, family characteristics, conditions of the residence, family morale and adjustment, and family opinions regarding the community and education. These observations and those of local coordinators comprised the first section of this report. For the formal research, reported in the second section, 1 depressed rural county in Illinois was chosen and 2 random samples were drawn: 1 of all families in the area and 1 of the severely disadvantaged families. The 4 dimensions studied were economic, psychological, sociological, and anthropological. Also in the second section were (1) a summary of the characteristics of severely disadvantaged families residing in a selected depressed rural area; (2) an overview of the development of the model vocationally oriented, family-centered educational program, which was a major project objective; (3) a discussion of findings and conclusions pertaining to the evaluation of the REDY Educational Program; and (4) a statement of implications and recommendations. (PS)

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EDUCATION FOR THE RURAL DISADVANTAGED:

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

by

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Research Report

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PREFACE

This publication is one in a series of publications resulting from a comprehensive research project conducted by the Agricultural Education Division, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The research project, commonly referred to as Project READY (Rural Education Disadvantaged Youth), included an in-depth study of the characteristics of disadvantaged families residing in depressed rural areas, and the development and evaluation of a vocationally oriented, family centered educational program that may be used by educators in helping the disadvantaged populace of their communities.

To facilitate dissemination of the findings of Project READY, publications were prepared which focused on selected areas which were investigated. Publications resulting from this research project, including this research report, were:

1. An Overview of Project READY, Interim Report No. 1.
2. Social Class Stratification of Families in an Economically Depressed Rural Area, Interim Report No. 2.
3. Degree to Which Families are Satisfied with Selected Aspects of Family Life in an Economically Depressed Rural Area, Interim Report No. 3.
4. Community Social Behavior of Families in an Economically Depressed Rural Area, Interim Report No. 4.
5. Leisure Time Activities of Families in an Economically Depressed Rural Area, Interim Report No. 5.
6. Morale of Families in an Economically Depressed Rural Area, Interim Report No. 6.
7. A Family Centered Vocationally Oriented Educational Program for the Rural Disadvantaged, Interim Report No. 7.
8. Development of Human Resources Through a Vocationally Oriented Educational Program for Disadvantaged Families in Depressed Rural Areas, Final Report.
9. Characteristics of Disadvantaged Families Residing in a Depressed Rural Area, A Research Report.
10. Socioeconomic Aspects of Family Life in a Depressed Rural Area, A Research Report.
11. Educational Program Development for the Rural Disadvantaged, A Research Report.
12. Evaluation of an Educational Program for the Rural Disadvantaged, A Research Report.
13. Education for the Rural Disadvantaged: Summary of Findings and Conclusions of an Experimental Study, A Research Report.

Lloyd J. Phipps
Project Director

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION IS GIVEN TO DR. GERALD R. FULLER WHO ASSISTED IN INITIATING AND PLANNING THE PROJECT AND WHO SERVED AS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROJECT REDY FOR THREE YEARS.

A number of other individuals have been closely identified with the project. Among them are Don Brockett, Paul Brown, H. C. Hendren, Sam Jones, Steve Pollock, Keith Romack, Jack Shetler, Clifford Sichta and Robert Wheeler. These men served as consultants and local coordinators for the project. Sincere thanks are extended to Mrs. Julia D. Flewelling for her tireless efforts in providing typing and clerical assistance.

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A host of people serving as assistants, clerical workers, key-punch operators or computer-programers have faithfully assisted in one or more phases of Project REDY. The contribution of the following individuals insured the success of the project:

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SUBJECTIVE FINDINGS CONCERNING THE RURAL DISADVANTAGED

INTRODUCTION

To accomplish the objectives of Project REDY, it was necessary that research staff members develop and maintain a close working relationship with selected disadvantaged rural families. This interaction produced information which was impossible to analyze by conventional statistical techniques. Nevertheless, the anecdotes of interviewers, local coordinators and research staff members reflect considerable insight into the problems of the socioeconomic rural disadvantaged. Perhaps the objective findings resulting from the research can be more effectively intellectualized after consideration is given to observations and impressions gained by people who worked intimately with the rural disadvantaged.

Interviewers tape recorded their impressions and observations following each family interview. The recordings were made in the interviewer's automobile on portable equipment within minutes of the conclusion of the interview.

Local coordinators likewise tape recorded their impressions of research participants. Further, many sessions of the educational program were tape recorded. In addition, researchers and local coordinators' conferences were tape recorded.

Data included in the aforementioned recordings and from written reports were closely scrutinized. Representative data were extracted, organized, and edited to reflect subjective findings of the project staff. Presented at the end of this section is a general description of a typical depressed rural county and the living conditions of its severely disadvantaged inhabitants.

INTERVIEWERS' ANECDOTES

To study objectively the characteristics of rural families who were socially and economically deprived and to evaluate the REDY Educational Program, it was necessary to interview many disadvantaged family members. Personal interviews brought the interviewers into the environment of the rural disadvantaged and enabled them to observe existing situations.

Observations of interviewers were uniform in many respects. However, differences did exist among the characteristics of the families interviewed.

Home Surroundings

General observations of the home surroundings indicated that many of the families were economically depressed. Some families

appeared content, and satisfied with their plight. Many families indicated no desire to change. Paradoxically, other families were discontent and exhibited desire for change.

Access to home. Interviewers often had to walk part of the distance from the main road to the family residence. Muddy lanes and no bridges over eroded areas necessitated the walks. One interviewer found it impossible to drive the last one-fourth mile from the main road to the home. He reported, "...as I approached the house, two hound dogs ran to greet me...I stepped upon a tree stump which served as the front porch...a preschool boy asked me in..."

Farming practices and home surroundings. Poor farming practices were evident. Corn still remained to be harvested late in the winter. Corn was planted up and down the slopes instead of on the contour. Small ears and frail stalks were common in corn fields and weeds had been allowed to seed.

Fences were old and sagging. Gates were off hinges and did not close properly. Old cars, scrap metal piles, tin cans, trash, old chairs and couches were common sights on many farmsteads.

However, there were exceptions. One farm yard had no grass, but neatly trimmed shrubs had been planted and maintained. Further, one interviewer reported, "...the conditions surrounding the home were impressive. Although the house was old it was tidy...flowers had been planted and cared for in front of the house."

Condition of the Residence

The majority of interviewers found similar circumstances regarding the condition of the residence. In general, family residences were shabby, and in need of major repair. Very few of the houses were painted and some were constructed of unfinished logs.

Age and size. Most of the residences were old, but some had been constructed within the past few years. Generally, the houses were small. One house was only 12 feet by 15 feet in size. An interviewer reported a family of eight lived in a house with three rooms. One of these rooms was a living room furnished with a table, three old chairs television set, cabinet, couch, and a bed. All of the furnishings were in poor condition.

General repair. One interviewer reported entering a home by stepping through a screen door without a screen and pushing open another door that did not have a knob. Upon entering the house, the odor of ammonia from unwashed diapers prevailed. Plaster had apparently fallen from the walls and the holes had been covered with cardboard. An old blanket hung in the doorway, serving as a door between the living room and a bedroom.

One interview was given during a thunder storm. While the parents were providing objective data, the children covered an old piano with plastic and methodically placed pans and buckets in appropriate places. The family explained that the roof had leaked since the installation of a television antenna two years before.

Home conveniences. Although most families possessed a television set, other modern gadgets and conveniences were often absent. Most families owned a wringer-type washing machine, but a few families still relied on a scrub board for washing clothes.

Indoor bathrooms were not common. Observation usually revealed a grass barren path to a privy. Noteworthy however, a few homes had no indoor bathroom and no apparent outdoor privy.

A few families lived in nicely kept, clean homes. Although the houses were small and old they were tidy and adequately repaired. Interviewers were favorably impressed by families living in these homes. These families exhibited an awareness of their economic condition, and took pride in their possessions. These families presented an outward desire to further improve their condition.

A relationship appeared to exist between the home surroundings and the condition of the home. If the surroundings were orderly, so was the home and its contents. If the surroundings were disorganized, the home and its contents were usually disorganized. Recognizing that the home is usually the responsibility of the mother, and the surroundings the responsibility of the father, all interviewers questioned which variable affected the other.

Characteristics of Families

Size of family. The socioeconomically depressed families interviewed were large and usually had children at home and children away from home. The children at home ranged from infants to above twenty years of age. More frequently, children over 18 years of age had left home to seek employment in metropolitan areas. As might be expected, the larger the family the more deprived the family appeared. Several families had three generations living under the same roof. One family remarked, "...Grandpa is living with us as he ain't got no other place to go."

Head of household. The head of the household, defined as a leadership role, was difficult to identify. Some interviews were given by the mother and others by the father. Frequently, a mother or father would provide all the information while the other remained silent. One mother remarked, "...I wish my husband was home so he could answer your questions..." Other mothers asked the interviewers to return when the father would be at home. In other cases, the father would defer to the mother. One father remarked, "...she has

more education than me, let her answer..." Still another father said, "...the old lady wears the pants, she'll talk to you..."

Noteworthy, some families shared in the responses to questions. These families indicated no definite head of the household. Several interviewers observed that the family appeared closer knit when the father was the head of the household.

Health and nutrition. Health of the family members varied from family to family, but generally, physical and mental handicaps seemed more frequent than in non-socioeconomically depressed families. Hearing difficulties were evident in many households. Many interviewers asked that questions be read to them because they could not see well. However, interviewers indicated that poor eye sight was often given as an excuse for poor reading ability. However, poor eye sight was common, and reflections of interviewers could produce very few cases in which eye glasses were worn.

Nutrition, in terms of a balanced diet, was poor. One family reported their favorite and most frequent meal was biscuits and gravy. Fresh meat and fruit were almost nonexistent. One mother reported that her family only had oranges at Christmas. One interviewer conducted an interview near meal time and observed that the space heater was serving as a cooking range. A large pot was brewing and an appetizing aroma was present. The interviewer remarked how good it smelled and was asked to stay for rabbit and raccoon stew.

Again, opposite extremes were noted. Some families exhibited few physical or mental impairments and quality and quantity of diets appeared to be adequate.

Morale and Adjustment of Families

General adjustment and morale of families appeared to be related to surrounding conditions and the condition of the residence. Families who took pride in the material goods they possessed seemed better adjusted. This was not characteristic of families with unclean, untidy surroundings and homes.

Religions. Families exhibiting high morale had a positive attitude toward religion. These families remarked how important church was to them and that they attended regularly. One mother indicated that her 18 year old son had not missed attending church on Sunday for 16 years. She had been ill for several years, but had not missed a Sunday for two years. The Bible often was the only obvious source of reading material in the home. One family referred to the Bible to provide evidence of the ages of family members. Nevertheless, many families scoffed at religion. An often asserted opinion was, "...those people who go to church don't practice what they preach..."

Occupations. Work gave the impression of providing both a means for adjustment and a source of anxiety. Families who worked appeared to be better adjusted and to have higher morale. On the other hand, families reported having to work very hard and very long hours just to keep ahead. One father noted, "...I'd leave here in a minute if I could get a better job. But I can't do anything and people won't hire me..." One mother reported, "...I probably could get a better job if I'd quit my present job and look for another... but my family can't afford for me not to work all the time..."

Occupations of rural socioeconomically depressed family members covered an array of jobs. In addition to farming, families reported jobs as manual laborers, truck drivers, janitors, butchers, carpenters, waitresses, mental hospital helpers, and others. Generally, steady good paying jobs were difficult to find. Women appeared to have more difficulty in finding jobs than men. Several widowed women relied entirely on Aid for Dependent Children as the only source of income.

Expectations. Expectation of the future also appeared as a source of anxiety. Families typically expressed concern that their boys would just go to the Army and their girls would get married. Interviewers reported an apparent trend for girls to marry into other depressed families. One reply concerning the future was, "...I would just as soon be dead as live the way I live now..."

Higher expectations were also present. Most families hoped that "better times" would come. Generally, expectations appeared to revolve around physical things such as food and better homes. Some families expressed a desire to travel. One such family noted that their children had never been more than 50 miles from home.

Family Opinions of Community

Clear-cut attitudes toward the communities were not revealed in a subjective context. Some families were satisfied with the community while others expressed dissatisfaction.

Composition of community. Typical responses toward the community composition were, "...in a few years this is going to be an old man's country, the younger generation is going somewhere else to work and only poor retired people will live here..." Oppositely, other families noted, "...our oldest is 27 years old with a sixth-grade education and has never left the county..."

Government. Local government and its operations was a topic of ambiguity. Some families seemed unaware that the local government existed. Other families distrusted any public servant, while still others thought the local government was doing the best it could.

Neighbors. Interviewers were perplexed by the limited knowledge that rural families had of their neighbors. Several families did not know the names of their neighbors. However, some families appeared to be familiar with the entire community.

Opinions Regarding Education

Interviewers consistently reported strong positive attitudes toward education. Most parents noted the lack of their education and the desire for more education for their children.

Present education. Parents frequently possessed less than a high school education. One lady had just completed a beautician program and planned to open a beauty shop in her home. Only one person had completed a college program. This person appeared mentally unstable and was not using her education. Parents, with few exceptions, strongly desired that their children obtain as much education as possible.

Children's education. Many of the children had completed high school and enrolled in post high school programs. However, dropouts beyond high school seemed to be prevalent.

Educational expenses. Expense of education was often mentioned as a major deterrent. Parents often felt that education for their children beyond high school was completely beyond their means. Further, parents seemed unaware of aid available for further education. Only a few parents mentioned lack of ability as a deterrent to further education.

A very small minority indicated that education was unimportant. Although one father, obviously a poor farmer, noted, "...education in agriculture is stupid..." One mother indicated, "...a diploma is important but what you learn isn't..." Still another parent noted, "...I can figure as good as most at the box factory but I can't get a figuring job cause I ain't got a high school education."

LOCAL COORDINATORS' ANECDOTES

Observations and impressions concerning educational activities evolved from on-site audio tape recordings made by teachers of agricultural occupations who served as local coordinators for the REDY Educational Program. These records were made following home visitations and group meetings. Audio tape recordings were also made of some group meetings. Similar to interviews, comments and observations made by local coordinators were uniform. However, a diverse range was evident.

The exemplar educational program was organized into three correlated and overlapping segments. The first part consisted of

securing the attention of severely disadvantaged rural families. The second segment included the establishment of family goals. The initiation of action to reach established goals directed the third area of concentration. The coordinators' anecdotes are organized and presented to parallel these three areas. In addition, a section is devoted to presenting feedback from participating disadvantaged families and local coordinators in regard to the value of the educational program.

Family Motivation

Attention getting, developing interest, and motivating for action are terms which equally describe the first phase of the exemplar educational program. Naturally attention getting or motivation had to be developed throughout the program. However, the following subjective findings are confined to attention getting from the time of identifying families until they started to participate in family goal setting. The primary objective of this phase was to establish rapport with the family.

Home visitation. All coordinators concurred that home visitations were essential to developing rapport with the socioeconomically disadvantaged. However, methods of implementing effective home visits varied. Several coordinators started with visits to the families they knew. From these visits evolved techniques which the coordinator could use with other families. One coordinator was able to contact several families through family members who were or had been students in his program. Another coordinator was successful by simply calling at the home and introducing himself as a local teacher who wanted to get acquainted.

Securing information. During the first contact all coordinators refrained from taking notes. Further, most coordinators carried no notebook or other materials. The coordinator called to visit. Dress of the coordinator was casual. The conversation was directed so that families might volunteer information relating to their problems, attitudes, and aspirations. Again, no formal questions were asked during the initial contact.

Reaction by the families varied, but generally the families were pleased that someone was interested in them. One widow remarked, "...I'm glad you came just to talk and not to tell me my son was in trouble..." Not uncommon, the families were reluctant to ask the coordinator into the home. One coordinator reported a father as remarking several times during the first visit that he, "...was planning to clean the place up..."

Follow-up visits. Follow-up visits were made to present plans for the educational program. Coordinators found that relating the meetings to helping the family help the children received the most favorable reaction. Initially most of the families were

reluctant to attend group family meetings. Coordinators countered the reluctance with interest and offers to provide transportation. In addition, coordinators consistently stressed that the educational meetings were for the entire family. Many families responded and attended the first meeting. One father contacted the coordinator and asked for transportation for his children. The father worked nights and could not attend the meetings. Another family walked to a neighbor's home and called for the coordinator to pick them up as their car would not start.

Coordinators reported that development of a personal relationship between the teacher and family members is essential to gain the cooperation and support of the rural disadvantaged. Local coordinators experienced rewarding success when person-to-person relationships were established with severely disadvantaged families in the community.

Establishing Family Goals

The exemplar educational program was built around securing attention of participants, identifying the problem, assisting participants to identify goals, and providing instruction which could aid in solution of their problems. Goal setting was a continuous process. Coordinators directed activities that encouraged the establishment of realistic goals, and observed behavior which supported the notion that goals served to motivate family members to take action to improve their situation.

Techniques. All coordinators agreed that goals for disadvantaged families must be small and realistic. Global goals were too distant to provide motivation necessary for change to take place. Families who discussed problems and set goals together appeared to achieve more success in meeting their goals. Coordinators further observed that goals relating to physical things appeared to be accomplished more often than goals not physical in nature. Families who set a goal and obtained the goal were eager to establish new goals. Goal setting and working toward goals appeared to be transferred to other families participating in the educational activities. One family might set and verbalize a goal. If this family attained the goal, other families were interested and appeared to imitate the other family.

While the above noted techniques seemed workable, some families appeared unable to set and accomplish goals. Most coordinators agreed that families who were not successful in goal setting tended to set "dreamer" goals that were not realistic. Coordinators recognizing their problem often provided individualized instruction and encouraged these families to set fewer and smaller goals.

Examples of goals. Many families did not realize the educational opportunities available. Frequently families exhibited no knowledge of government loans and scholarships. Following introduction to this

information, parents would verbalize intentions to encourage their children to continue their education beyond high school.

Through discussions, one family revealed that a daughter, presently a nurse's aid, aspired to advance. To advance the girl would have to complete her high school education. The family set goals to assist the girl in completing her high school education. The mother took a job as a waitress to help finance the daughter's training.

Many families set goals to improve their farms, homes, and home surroundings. Coordinators noted that action toward goals appeared stronger immediately following group meetings and home visits. Noteworthy, several families made improvements in their homes and their surroundings. General cleaning and minor repairs were observed by coordinators as they made repeated visits to the residences of participating families.

Realistic goal setting was a difficult educational practice to accomplish. Coordinators observed that families with goals seemed to progress much faster than families without goals. More important, coordinators sensed subtle changes in the attitudes of many family members.

Instruction for Action

Motivation and updating goals were constant throughout the exemplar educational program. To assist in accomplishing the goals established by families, instruction was provided. Generally the instruction revolved around mutual family problems and concerns. Instruction was provided through group meetings and home visits.

Identification of problems. Family problems of participants guided the group instruction. Families were encouraged to verbalize problems from their situations. Initially, many family members were hesitant to identify their problems; however, after the first few group meetings, family members freely verbalized and discussed problems and concerns that confronted them in making improvements in their situation.

Solution to problems. Instructional materials provided by the research staff were adapted and used by the local coordinator to assist families in identifying alternative sources of actions to overcome the problems they encountered. Family members were encouraged to select the alternative that was compatible with family goals and within the means of the family. Coordinators agreed that individual family instruction in the home was instrumental in helping families reach goals. Without continuous encouragement and support, severely disadvantaged families would not maintain action needed to reach their goals.

Common interest. Coordinators reported that children served as a point of common interest among adult members of disadvantaged families. Parents were willing to help their children set educational goals and to work to help them accomplish their goals. School counselors assisted in providing instruction related to occupational information, training requirements and other topics of interest to participants. With only a few exceptions, this was the first time parents had been exposed to these topics.

Consumer education was a common interest to the severely disadvantaged participants. Coordinators reported rewarding success from using newspaper advertisements for instructional aids where families discussed prices, quality, and quantity of consumer goods.

Occupations and requirements for entry was another area of common interest and concern. Coordinators were surprised at the lack of occupational knowledge possessed by family members, especially the adults. Opportunities for employment and educational requirements were common topics of discussion. Coordinators noted that families were more realistic in their discussion of jobs and training required following group instruction on these topics.

Instruction time. Coordinators stressed that formal instruction at group meetings was to last for only one hour. Refreshments were served following one hour of instruction and informal discussions commonly continued. Small children often seemed restless and one coordinator reported a line of children to the bathroom during the entire meeting. Later the coordinator realized that only one family in the group had an indoor bathroom in their residence. This coordinator quipped of "on job training" and "learning by doing."

Sense of belonging. Coordinators attempted to provide an environment of togetherness. Care was taken to introduce all participants in each group meeting. Open discussion was encouraged and consensus regarding problems and opinions were noted. Togetherness was also fostered in several centers through games in the gym and pot-luck dinners. Transfer of the togetherness was observed through the grouping of students at school who participated in the program.

Teacher-family bond. Coordinators reported that disadvantaged family members were willing to place confidence in people who expressed a sincere interest in them. Coordinators who were able to establish a firm teacher-family relationship experienced rewarding success. One coordinator had a nephew who worked with the father of one of the participating families. The father had great respect for the nephew. The coordinator used his nephew as an example of how to work part-time and still complete a college education. The father in turn used the coordinator's nephew as an example for their son. Other coordinators reported that interest in farming operations and family problems tended to make families more receptive.

Instruction based on problem solving proved successful. Coordinators considered involvement as the most important ingredient of effective instruction for the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Evaluation Through Feedback

Throughout the REDY Educational Program, the coordinators evaluated both positive and negative progress. Standardized instruments were administered to measure objectively general attitude and morale. However, coordinators' impressions and observations produced information that could not be secured through interview instruments.

Educational feedback. Coordinators reported an improvement in the attitude of many family members toward education and school. One parent remarked, "...a good education is the most important thing I can give my children..." Participation by adults and children in other school activities increased. Coordinators observed families attending athletic events. Before the exemplar educational program, these families were rarely seen at school functions. One family noted, "...our class meeting is the highlight of the month..." Attendance of children of participating families improved for the regular day school. One coordinator observed that boys in the program now group together in school. Heretofore, these boys had been known as "loners." Finally, several coordinators noted that they were now being called upon for advice. Both children and adults had apparently identified the coordinators as experts and friends.

Occupational feedback. Previously noted were examples of family members working toward better jobs. Fathers changed jobs and added part-time jobs. Mothers often found part-time or full-time jobs and in-school children were actively seeking part-time employment. Several coordinators noted that family income had easily doubled during the program. Most significant, students seemed to align with goals of completing school, rather than getting a full-time job.

Non-participant feedback. Some families failed to respond by attending group meetings. In several cases, the coordinators continued to try and establish rapport. One coordinator reported a situation in which continued visitations did not appear to be helping. However, much to the surprise of the coordinator, a young man called at the school. The young man had been a former student of the coordinator and was the son of the non-participating family. The young man wished to thank the coordinator for his interest in his family. The youth had been in the service and his parents had written of the coordinator's interest. The young man subsequently convinced a younger brother to return to school.

Another family did not attend group meetings, but requested the information which was provided. The coordinator reported that the

mother would ask questions and discuss the material when he called. The coordinator felt she was better informed than some who attended the meetings.

Negative feedback. One coordinator reported having a high school boy setting goals of being highest scholastically in his high school class and being the best football player on the team. At the close of a grading period, the boy received mostly C's and did not make the football team. Needless to say, the boy was very despondent.

Another family had two children who quit school during the program. Efforts to get the students to return failed. However, both secured full-time jobs in a metropolitan area. The rest of the family continued to attend the group meetings.

The most negative situation reported by a coordinator occurred in a family living under considerable economic and social deprivation. The home and surroundings were deplorable. During the program two daughters left home. The coordinator assisted a son in securing a part-time job. The job provided excellent advancement potential and training. The employer developed an interest in the boy. However, the father objected to the boy having a job and insisted that he quit the job. The coordinator had not been able to develop rapport with the father.

Coordinators' feedback. Coordinators' feedback was also encouraging. Several coordinators reported that working with the socioeconomically disadvantaged was a real "eye opener." One coordinator noted, "...this has been the most rewarding experience I've ever had in teaching..." Another coordinator remarked, "...all teachers should be required to work with the disadvantaged... if for no other reason than to help them appreciate the non-disadvantaged..."

Subjective evaluation was conducted throughout the educational program. The research staff was able to identify accomplishments and difficulties through various forms of feedback from participating families and local coordinators that was useful in developing and evaluating the REDY Educational Program.

A DEPRESSED RURAL COUNTY AND ITS INHABITANTS

A person driving through the county on one of the main routes of travel would develop a feeling that here is an area of beautiful rolling hills, steep bluffs and picturesque timber land. The fields along the roadside are dotted with cattle grazing in green pastures, well fed herds of swine, some small apple orchards and patches of corn and wheat. Perhaps he would pass a limestone quarry or a

major sawmill. He would notice the neatly kept older homes and the newer, modern houses which are located along the main highways. Occasionally, a road sign would indicate a small village is located somewhere off to the right or left of the main highway and he may even glimpse the outskirts of one of these communities. If the route leads through the county seat, the traveler will probably sense that here is a nice, quiet, old rural village with its own town square lined with typical businesses. He would see the relatively modern junior and senior high schools. The casual observer would leave the county thinking how nice it would be to live or vacation in this area. To the observer, the people living in this county while not wealthy, are "doing all right."

Only when one leaves the main arteries of travel in the county does he see beneath the cloak of semi-prosperity which seems to be attracted to the borders of main highways. A person sensitive to the problems of the agrarious would notice the small size of the farms and as he progressed on the gravel or dirt road, the disrepair of the outbuildings and homes that may have already been abandoned. Occasionally, he may ford a small stream as it traverses the road. If it happens to be a rainy day, he may decide not to procede down one of the roads even though it is definitely the only connection some families have with the "outside world."

The traveler who decided to visit one of the small villages located in the depressed rural county will most likely find a general store, post office and gasoline station surrounded by a cluster of older homes. An astute observer will notice the piles of firewood and coal used by families in cooking food and heating the home. An occasional privy with a well worn path to its door will be seen. He will see houses which show visible signs that their owners are vainly trying to keep them looking respectable interspersed among those houses which will be uninhabitable in the not too distant future. The evidence of a formerly prosperous and quaint rural community represented by vacant stores and houses will be impressed upon the observer's mind. Usually a white, well kept church will stand out like a last rallying point for the citizens of the village. Generally, an elementary school building housing students up to grade six would be found in or near the village. It would be evident that the building contained only a few classrooms. He might observe a relatively modern school building or he could see an old, multistory brick building in which only the first floor is considered safe for housing children.

The curious person who is interested in locating the major industries in the community, will quickly recognize the importance of agriculture. He may also see a large saw mill in operation which indicates that forest products and forestry are a part of the economy. A concrete block factory, a limestone quarry, a coal mine or a shoe factory may be found in the county.

The person who wishes to view the environment of a typical severely disadvantaged family would undoubtedly anticipate finding rather poor living conditions. His expectations would be rewarded in many instances. After driving down a dirt lane having rather deep ruts, one might find himself approaching an unpainted house. He would notice a rather dilapidated porch at the front of the one story home surrounded by a yard in which little grass could be seen. A dog or two and possibly a few chickens might be seen near the house. Some piles of old lumber, scrap metal, junked cars, and empty tin cans would also be observed. Approaching the front door, one would see no screen door and no window screens on the house. Entering the home, he would find a living room containing some well worn furniture surrounding a pot bellied space heater. Some worn pieces of linoleum would cover the floor with the walls covered with old, torn wall paper. Looking around the family residence, it would be seen that electricity was available but that the conveniences of running water and an indoor bathroom were absent. Most likely there would be an old gas or wood cook stove in the kitchen and an old refrigerator. An alert observer would frequently see mice and perhaps rats scouting for food in the family residence.

Careful examination of the rural community would reveal that a large number of families lack the home conveniences and consumer goods considered basic in today's society.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PROJECT REDY

INTRODUCTION

Project REDY was concerned with the development and evaluation of a systematic educational program that would bring about desirable changes in attitudes, behaviors, and vocational competence of rural disadvantaged youth. Recognizing that the attitudes of the family influence the way children develop, and that some attitudes learned by disadvantaged rural youth are not conducive to the development of their full educational and employment potential, the research concentrated on both youth and adults who resided in depressed rural areas.

The objectives of the research were: to develop a vocationally oriented, family centered educational program for severely disadvantaged families residing in depressed rural areas; and to evaluate the model educational program by using experimental research techniques. The model educational program, developed and tested under experimental conditions in Project REDY, focused on families as a means of (1) obtaining and maintaining the interest of youth and other family members, (2) raising family members to the level of readiness necessary for a realistic confrontation of reality regarding their socioeconomic situation, (3) helping family members arrive at decisions which relate to the improvement of their socioeconomic status, (4) providing families and family members with opportunities for carrying out their decisions, (5) providing psychological and guidance support during this process, and (6) evaluating the outcomes.

To accomplish the broad objectives of the comprehensive study, the research activities were divided into five major correlated phases as follows:

1. Phase I - An in-depth study of the characteristics of a sample of the population of families residing in a selected socioeconomically depressed rural area.

2. Phase II - A comprehensive study of the characteristics of a sample of the severely disadvantaged families residing in the study area.

3. Phase III - The development of a model vocationally oriented, family centered educational program for severely disadvantaged rural families.

4. Phase IV - The evaluation of the model vocationally oriented, family centered educational program using experimental research techniques.

5. Phase V - The analyses of data and the reporting of findings.

This section includes (1) a summary of the characteristics of severely disadvantaged families residing in a selected depressed rural area, (2) an overview of the development of the model vocationally oriented, family centered educational program, (3) a discussion of findings and conclusions pertaining to the evaluation of the REDY Educational Program, and (4) a statement of implications and recommendations.

Characteristics of Severely Disadvantaged Families

One of the early activities of Project REDY was the identification of the universe of depressed rural counties in Illinois. From this universe of depressed rural counties, one county was selected as the site for a comprehensive study of families residing in the area. From the population of families living in the study area, two random samples were drawn. One sample was representative of all families residing in the area and the other sample represented only the severely disadvantaged families. Severely disadvantaged families were considered to be those families who had a net annual income of $3000 or less or who were considered socially or economically disadvantaged by a state or local welfare agency.

Selected characteristics were compared between a sample of the severely disadvantaged families residing in the depressed rural area and a sample of the total population of families. Interviews were conducted with family members in the two random samples to collect data. The data gathering instruments employed were tried out in an earlier pilot study to test their applicability to the research. The four dimensions studied were (1) economic, (2) psychological, (3) sociological, and (4) anthropological.

An analysis of the data collected from family members residing in the study area provided the researchers with an understanding of the values, beliefs, attitudes and behavioral patterns of severely disadvantaged families. A brief description of the characteristics of severely disadvantaged rural families is presented in this section.

The size of the severely disadvantaged families was frequently large compared to other families in the area studied. Four or more children per family were common with a majority of them living at home. Compared to other families in the area studied, severely disadvantaged families had fewer family members who contributed cash income to the family.

The parents of severely disadvantaged families were commonly less than 50 years of age. The adult family members frequently had less than an eighth grade education and only a few had earned a high school diploma. The severely disadvantaged families were not mobile. Over one-half of the parents still resided within the same county where they were born, and over three-fourths still lived within the state where they were born.

The educational attainment of out-of-school children of severely disadvantaged families patterned that of their parents who had not normally completed a high school education. Even though most of the young people had secured employment, more frequently in nonagricultural businesses than agriculturally oriented jobs, many had jobs that were temporary in nature and that required only limited skills.

Compared to other families residing in the rural area studied, the severely disadvantaged families generally lived in older more dilapidated houses that frequently lacked one or more of the conveniences of electricity, telephone, and indoor bathroom. Less than one-half of the severely disadvantaged families included in the study had bathrooms in the family dwelling. Even though a majority of the disadvantaged families owned the residence where they lived, they were still in great need of major maintenance and repair. The home furnishings were generally in very poor condition and the yard and surrounding area were generally trashy and unkept. Most of the disadvantaged family dwellings were located outside the boundaries of towns and villages and away from the main arteries of travel in the county. The homes were often located along unimproved roads in remote areas and their presence was frequently unknown by the more affluent neighbors living nearby.

A majority of the severely disadvantaged rural families operated a farm business. However, only one in ten farms operated by severely disadvantaged families produced more than one-half of the family income. The farms were small and frequently poorly managed, and contributed only limited family income. Many of the farm operators and other family members had found part-time, off-farm employment, or had obtained public financial assistance to help support their families. The children commonly contributed to the family income by working on the home farm. However, this work did not generate large amounts of income because of the lack of competent management and the insufficient scope of the farm enterprises. Livestock and field crops, typical to the area, were commonly raised on the farm. However, some farmers were trying to produce products that were not adapted to their area. Only a few of the families raised vegetables and fruits for family consumption.

A majority of adult members, parents and older children, of severely disadvantaged families living at home were employed in an agricultural occupation. A large group was attempting to make a living for their family with limited acres of productive land, inadequate capital, and lack of business management skills. Labor was generally available, but was frequently not utilized advantageously due to lack of other production resources. Adult family members commonly recognized their inability to successfully compete with the more progressive farmers in the community. Adults also recognized that their lack of education and skills handicapped them in competing for employment in off-farm agricultural firms and other businesses that required specialized knowledges and skills.

The severely disadvantaged families residing in the depressed rural area studied tended to associate themselves with lower social classes; middle-working, working and lower-working. They were, in general, dissatisfied with the opportunities available to them for fulfilling their wants when compared to the average family. Life in the depressed rural area was least satisfying to the families as a whole in terms of: (1) availability of opportunity to satisfy wants related to residence and family welfare, (2) quality of items related to the residence, and (3) quality of items related to consumer goods.

Aspects of community life that received a relatively high rating by severely disadvantaged families included: (1) community spirit, (2) interpersonal relations, (3) family responsibility, (4) schools, (5) churches, and (6) tension areas. Economic behavior in the community and the local government both received a low rating by the severely disadvantaged families when compared to other families in the study area and other areas of community life.

Severely disadvantaged families were less well adjusted to their environment than a sample of families that represented all socioeconomic levels. Likewise, the morale of deprived families was lower than other families in the study area. Fewer of the severely disadvantaged families than other families in the community participated in the leisure time activities studied. Their frequency of participation was less and they did not enjoy their participation as much.

The following statements summarize the findings related to the characteristics of the families in the sample studied, which was representative of the severely disadvantaged families in a typical depressed rural area of Illinois:

- about 93 percent of the families lived outside corporated areas and nearly two-thirds lived on a farm.
- almost all of the families resided in a house which had an average of five rooms.
- many of the houses were in urgent need of major repair.
- approximately five percent of the family residences did not have electricity.
- about 40 percent of the homes did not have telephones.
- slightly over one-half of the family residences did not have indoor bathrooms.
- about 80 percent of the families owned their own home.

- approximately three-fourths of the family residences were located along county or township roads, some of which were impassable during bad weather.

- three-fifths of the families were engaged in a production agriculture business, however, only 10 percent of the families received at least one-half of the family income from the farm.

- about 45 percent of the farms consisted of less than 40 acres.

- major farm enterprises included various classes of livestock and field crops.

- a few families produced vegetables, fruit and meat for family consumption.

- an average of 1.41 family members living at home contributed cash income to the family.

- an average of 2.07 family members living at home contributed family income in work.

- families averaged 6.09 members in the immediate family.

- slightly over one-third of the families received some type of public financial assistance.

- social security was the most common type of financial assistance.

- mean age of parents was 45.43 years.

- about 85 percent of the parents were born within the state, and 57 percent were born within the county where they lived at the time of the study.

- average education completed by parents was 8.61 years.

- average education completed by out-of-school children was 10.73 years.

- approximately 50 percent of the adult family members living at home were employed in an agriculturally oriented occupation.

- approximately 90 percent of the adult family members living away from home were employed in a non-agricultural occupation.

- about 90 percent of the out-of-school children who lived at home were employed in non-agricultural occupations.

- 100 percent of the children living away from home were employed in non-agricultural occupations.

- approximately 50 percent of the families associated themselves with the two lowest social classes, working and low-working.

- families were dissatisfied with the quality of social participation and family welfare in the community.

- family members had low opinions of economic behavior and local government in their community.

- leisure time activities provided few valuable experiences on which vocational education, motivation, attitudes, plans and skills could be built.

- families were poorly adjusted in their communities and had a low morale.

The Educational Program

The needs of severely disadvantaged rural family members directed the development of the vocationally oriented, family centered educational program. Based on these needs, objectives, units of instructions, teaching topics and anticipated problem areas were identified and incorporated into an overall program plan. The educational program focused upon three major areas: (1) determining realistic career choices and plans for the children, (2) improving family financial management, and (3) improving family income.

A single school district in a depressed rural area was utilized to initially try out the educational program. Families in the community with special needs were identified. These families were randomly assigned to an experimental group and two control groups. Various instruments were employed as a pretest-posttest measure to gather data that afforded an objective evaluation of the REDY Educational Program. In addition, the local coordinator provided subjective evaluation as he conducted the pilot program. Data from both these sources guided the development of the educational program that was later conducted and evaluated on a larger scale.

Prior to conducting the vocationally oriented educational program in a local school, specific action was taken to identify disadvantaged rural families in the community, to establish rapport with family members, and to motivate families to cooperate by participating in the educational activities. Identification of families, gaining attention of family members, and family motivation were three important activities conducted as a part of the initiation stage of the occupationally oriented, family centered educational program.

The Agricultural Education Division, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, provided assistance to the cooperating school

in the form of source units, teaching plans, selected visual aids, and program evaluation. In addition, staff members were available for consultation throughout the duration of the program.

The school recognized the REDY Educational Program as a part of the adult education program of the agricultural occupations department. The program was conducted as a part of the local secondary school's effort to improve education in the community. The agricultural occupations instructor served as the local coordinator and instructor.

Family members, adults and children over twelve years of age, in the experimental educational program were encouraged to attend the 12 group meetings conducted approximately once each month. The problems and concerns of participants directed the educational activities. The local coordinator generally followed the comprehensive teaching plans provided in conducting the educational activities, but adapted the plans to meet the needs of his particular group. After each group meeting, the local coordinator made an instructional visit to the home of each family enrolled in the program to personnalize the instruction.

In addition to the objective evaluation provided by analyzing the pretest-posttest data collected from the experimental and control groups, the educational activities were subjected to continuous evaluation by the local coordinator and the researchers. The program that served effectively in reaching a small segment of disadvantaged families was modified according to findings observed in the pilot activities and recommended for expanded application and evaluation in a later phase of the research.

Evaluation of the Educational Program

The vocationally oriented, family centered educational program developed, on the basis of the needs of severely disadvantaged rural family members, and tried out in a selected rural school in southern Illinois was evaluated using a pretest-posttest control group design with five replications.

Population and sample. The twenty Illinois counties identified earlier in the study as being socially and economically depressed served as the universe for the research. From this universe, ten communities were selected to participate in the study. Officials who represented the school that served a major portion of the rural inhabitants of each community were asked to cooperate in the study. Five schools were randomly assigned to each of the treatment groups.

The population included all economically and socially disadvantaged rural families in the communities selected who had an annual income of less that $300, or equivalent amount for larger families,

who had children who were of high school age or younger. Families were also included who were considered to be disadvantaged by one or more community welfare agencies. Families in each community were randomly selected to cooperate in the project. Families in the experimental group were asked if they were willing to participate in the educational program while families in the control group were asked to participate in an educational survey. The final sample included ten or more families from each of the ten communities.

Instrumentation. To evaluate the REDY Educational Program, it was necessary to collect both pretest and posttest data from the experimental and control groups. Five standardized instruments, six interview schedules, a Family Data Record, and a school data form were utilized in data collection. With the exception of the Family Data Record, which was used only as a pretest measure, all instruments were used as pretest and posttest measures.

Treatment. The treatment for the experimentally designed study consisted of the vocationally oriented, family centered educational program developed as a part of the research. The educational program was conducted by the teachers of agricultural occupations in the five communities included in the experimental treatment group. The families in the five control communities received no treatment other than the pretest.

Design of the study and statistical analysis. The design for the exemplary phase of the study was a pretest-posttest control group design with five replications. Each of the ten schools included in the study served a depressed rural area that had a high percentage of severely disadvantaged families.

Analysis of variance, chi square and analysis of covariance statistics were employed to analyze the data related to description of the sample and in determining the effectiveness of the treatment. When the chi square statistic was employed, the replications of treatment groups were collapsed to increase the expected frequencies in the response classifications. Pretest data yielded by the Family Data Record and various interview schedules were analyzed to establish the degree of similarity between the experimental and control group families prior to the treatment.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the exemplary phase of the study the educational program was evaluated using an experimental design. The findings concerning the effectiveness of the REDY Educational Program are discussed in parts that correspond to the general areas measured by the data gathering instruments employed in the research.

Parental Desires for Their Children

Poverty in rural areas seems to perpetuate itself in that it is passed from one generation to another. The lack of ability to compete for employment in a competitive society frequently locks rural people in poverty. To help overcome this situation part of the REDY Educational Program was devoted to directing parental attention toward the future of their children.

The educational efforts were effective in getting parents to think realistically about their children's future occupation, education, and place of residence. Parents generally agreed that decisions concerning the choice of a lifetime occupation should be left up to the child, but that they should encourage them and help them determine the ways and means of gaining entry into their desired occupation.

Parents who participated in the educational program generally desired education for their children which was realistic in terms of the occupation desired by the children. The parents in the control group commonly desired a highschool education or less for their children while parents in the experimental group frequently desired specialized vocational training and post-secondary education for their children.

The cost of post-secondary education, and the ways of financing the children's education were emphasized in the educational program. After participating in the educational activities, parents were aware of the approximate cost of post-secondary education and alternatives available for financing the education of their children. Parents developed goals to help finance their children's education, realistically recognized the assistance that children could provide by working, and identified potential financial support available through loans, scholarships and other sources.

The educational program was effective in helping parents realistically recognize the level of income needed to support a family adequately. Parents receiving the treatment generally desired a higher level of income for their children as adults, and realized that children may have to leave the immediate area to find the employment they desired.

It appeared that the educational program was effective in making parents aware of their economic situation, and that they developed goals that would help their children obtain a way of life economically superior to their own.

Occupations and Organizations of Parents

In general, rural socioeconomically disadvantaged people are isolationists. They are often self-employed and their social life

is frequently limited to family activities that do not expand to community groups and organizations. In our modern society, it is almost impossible for a family to be self-contained and self-sufficient. Families must cooperate together, not only to satisfy their own needs, but for the common good of people in the community.

The educational program was effective in bringing some rural disadvantaged people back into the mainstream of community life. Some of the adults were motivated to seek a job that would help them provide adequately for their family. To gain entry into new employment, adult family members frequently acquired new skills by taking advantage of the vocational training available in their communities.

By involving rural disadvantaged family members in the REDY Educational Program, which was a part of the adult education program of five local schools, family members began to see the value of group and organizational activities. Family members were encouraged to become active in group activities related to their occupation, and to participate in organizations that would improve their community. As a result, many of the fathers of families in the experimental group started participating in organizations related to their occupations. Similarly, the mothers of the families in the experimental group started participating in civic, fraternal and other community organizations.

It may be concluded that the educational program was effective in changing the social attitude of some disadvantaged rural adults toward participation in community and job-related organizations.

Situation and Goals of Children

Children, twleve years of age and older who lived at home, were the central focus of the REDY Educational Program. The researchers hypothesized that the attention of parents could be gained by helping children develop realistic educational and occupational plans. By involving both parents and children in developing educational and occupational goals, the family had a greater chance of identifying ways to accomplish the goals.

The occupational orientation segment of the educational program was effective in helping children identify the job they desired for a lifetime career, and in determining the training required for entry into their chosen occupation. Many of the participants in the experimental group realized that acceptable jobs could be obtained in their community if they had the necessary training.

Realizing that specialized or advanced training was required for many of the jobs desired, participants established goals for the level of education they should attain. After participating in the educational program, most of the children were aware of ways and means

of financing the training or education they desired.

At the end of the educational program, children had established goals for the income level which they aspired to earn as adults. The income goals appeared to be realistic in light of the educational and occupational goals established and which, if accomplished, would provide a respectable living for a family.

Situation and Goals of the Family

Included in the educational program was a unit of instruction on improving the family income. Avenues for improving the family's income were explored, but the decision as to which alternative(s) would be adopted was the responsibility of each family.

Participation in the educational program seemed to make family members aware of their poor economic situation, and several families took steps to mitigate their situation by having additional family members secure jobs. Some families began to produce or expanded the production of home-raised products that could be used for family consumption. Some families concentrated on managing their meager income by adopting practices such as keeping record of expenditures, budgeting, developing shopping lists and shopping for good buys, and reducing or eliminating certain non-essential expenditures.

In an effort to improve their situation, the assistance available through various public agencies in the community was recognized and used by families in the experimental group. In addition to obtaining services from the local school, families utilized the services provided by the Office of Economic Opportunity and the employment service in their local communities.

The Farm Business

As a part of the improvement of the family's economic situations, families engaged in production agriculture were encouraged to increase their per unit production. Emphasis was placed on establishment of production goals and the adoption of recommended production practices. Farm operators in the experimental group tended to have slightly higher yield goals, however, the length of time between the treatment and the posttest measure was insufficient to identify improvements that may have resulted.

The Home and Its Surroundings

Participation in the educational program and the association with people in the community encouraged families to improve their living environment. Although the improvements were not drastic, many families did repair or remodel at least some part of their residence and acquired better furnishings. A more obvious

improvement was made in the yard and surroundings. The change toward having a neat and orderly yard and surroundings was considered a change toward re-entering the mainstream of community life.

School Grades and Attendance

School grades as well as attendance in school were considered to some extent measures of the effectiveness of an educational program which focused on the development of the potential capabilities of youth. Although there was no significant difference between the children in the treatment groups regarding school grades and attendance, some discoveries were made which should be considered. The overall grade point average of children in the treatment groups was below average while the grade point average for vocational courses was slightly above average. This finding may indicate that children from disadvantaged rural families were motivated and worked harder in vocational courses because they could associate the development of salable skills with the improvement of their economic situation.

Children in the treatment groups tended to be absent from school approximately two weeks per year. Causes for the high rate of absenteeism were not examined, but could be associated with the relevancy of the school to the needs of students from rural disadvantaged families.

Morale and General Adjustment of Family Members

Earlier findings in this study showed that living in a rural environment, lacking the necessities of life, degenerates an individual's feeling of worth in his home and community. Adult family members who cannot perceive methods they can use to remove themselves or their children from the socially and economically deprived environment will frequently be poorly adjusted in the community and exhibit a low morale.

After completing the REDY Educational Program, participating adult family members exhibited a significantly better morale and general adjustment than family members in the control group. The improvement in general adjustment and morale indicated that family members were motivated to improve their situation, or at least had hopes that their children could eventually break out of the chains of poverty.

It may be concluded that the educational program was effective in improving the attitude of adult family members toward the family, self-concept, and community. Positive attitudes and a desire for improvement must be developed before disadvantaged family members will take stpes to change their existing situation.

Leisure Time Activities

Earlier in this study it was concluded that the leisure time activities of disadvantaged families provided for few valuable experiences on which education, motivation, attitudes, plans and skills could be built. Therefore, activities that could be performed during the leisure time of family members to keep them mentally alert and motivated were included as a part of the educational program. Some adults who participated in the educational program tended to participate more in leisure time activities and enjoy them more than adults not receiving the treatment.

Wants and Satisfactions

It was concluded earlier in this study that rural f ilies were dissatisfied with some aspects of family living. Dissatisfaction is frequently a prerequisite to change, and in the case of the rural disadvantaged, hopefully, change would result in an improvement in family living. Thus, in this context, dissatisfaction could be recognized as a motivational force for disadvantaged families to strive for a more desirable way of life.

Although not statistically significant, families who participated in the educational program felt a slightly higher degree of deprivatinn than families who received no treatment. Thus, the increased deprivation felt by the experimental families may have been the cause for significant improvements in the home and surroundings that were made by the experimental group families.

This finding could indicate that the value system of the disadvantaged rural families had shifted slightly from an orientation toward "things" to a concern for "people." This possible change in values could be attributed to the fact that adult family members who participated in the educational program became cognizant of the educational and occupational needs of their children. An orientation change from "things" to "people" may have also been encouraged by the increased social involvement among family members who participated in the educational program.

Community Social Behavior

It was established earlier in this research that severely disadvantaged families had a relatively low opinion of some areas of social behavior that existed in the rural area. At the same time they had a favorable opinion of the quality of certain aspects of rural community life. The negative attitude may be attributed to the lack of participation in community activities by the rural disadvantaged. Since deprived adult family members often have limited social involvement in the community, they may see community groups and organizations as a threat to themselves and their families.

The educational program did not make a significant impact on the social attitude of participants, as measured by the Community Solidarity Index Schedule. However, a slight improvement was recognized in the adults' opinion of the social behavior that existed in their communities. It was reported earlier that the heads of the households had started participating in group and organizational activities related to their jobs, and that the wives had frequently started attending various community activities.

It may be concluded that the educational program was effective in uniting families with mutual values, needs and desires, and helping them discover their role in the community. Cohesiveness among people in a community increases group power and the chances of successfully gaining improvements for their family and the community.

Social Status

Rural disadvantaged people commonly associate themselves with the lower working social classes. The economic and social deterioration has in effect eliminated the higher social classes from the depressed rural areas. Some families, who in the past may have identified with the higher social classes, have either chosen or been forced to remain in the deprived rural area. These families have been unable to keep up with the mainstream of society.

Within the short duration of the experimental treatment, changes in the families' perceived social status were not observed. However, the identification of alternatives to improve economic conditions and the involvement of family members in social activities in the community may serve as a starting point for social mobility. The real effectiveness of the educational program may not lie with the present families, but with the future families of the children who were recipients of the experimental treatment.

Subjective Evaluation by Local Coordinators

Local coordinators reported that disadvantaged families were anti-social and suspicious of people representing formal organizations at first, and that personalized activities were essential to gain their initial cooperation and trust. Most of the families responded favorably to the interest exhibited in them by the local educator. The coordinators granted that group activities gained teacher efficiency and provided valuable social activities for participating families, but that individual family contacts were necessary to individualize instruction and to encourage families to take action to improve their situation.

The local coordinators expressed a deep personal involvement with families and stated that they had benefited both personally and professionally from their involvement. Coordinators were

rewarded for their efforts when they observed family members establish realistic occupational and educational goals; saw families start attending school and community functions; and realized that the economic conditions of the family had been improved due to better business or family economic management, or that more adequate or supplemental employment had been secured.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To break into the vicious cycle of poverty being passed from one generation to another, family members in this type of situation must be educated to the point where they can compete for adequate employment in our society. Public schools are charged with the responsibility of providing opportunities for individuals to receive occupational training necessary for employment. In recent years, the need to adapt educational programs to the needs of the disadvantaged has been magnified. However, before effective programs can be developed, it is necessary that educators understand the potential clientele of such programs. An understanding of the severely disadvantaged family members, their living conditions, and the social and economic problems they face is necessary to plan programs effectively that will equip youth and adults for the world of work.

Extensive educational programs, mass media, and typical educational activities are not likely to reach the members of disadvantaged rural families. Disadvantaged families are distrustful of educators and other community leaders representing formal organizations. Thus, it is essential that a local educator make himself accepted by these people and establish rapport with family members before they will actively participate in an educational program.

In addition to gaining the confidence of the rural disadvantaged, a local educator must gather data that can be used in planning educational activities to meet the needs of family members and in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Rural disadvantaged children and adults have different social, economic, cultural, and personal experiences both prior to formal education and in the classroom than their more advanced age-mates. The coordinator of an educational program must understand the student, his home and family experiences in order to make educational activities relevant to the severely disadvantaged.

Since a majority of the rural disadvantaged families live on farms in isolated areas, educational programs should concentrate not only on improving the economic level of family living, but also give attention to the social needs of family members. Activities that encourage family members to participate in group and community activities are necessary to bring severely disadvantaged families back into the mainstream of community life. Family members need

to learn to utilize community services that will help meet family needs and assist them in improving their present situation. Youth and adults alike need to be aware of the educational and employment opportunities available that may serve as avenues to adequate employment and improve the economic conditions of the family. Educational programs designed for the rural disadvantaged should be directed toward acquainting persons with the agencies and institutions in the community that can benefit the whole family or individual members.

Severely disadvantaged families are commonly large and striving to survive on very modest incomes. However, with some assistance in financial management, and evaluation and redirection of family goals, families may develop budgets that will improve their economic situation. Understanding the wise use of credit may allow families engaged in farming and other businesses to expand their business to improve efficiency and result in increased family income.

Vocationally oriented educational programs must be tied to the needs, interest, and experiences of the clientele. Educators must plan educational activities that will build upon experiences of the individual, many of which are unique to the rural disadvantaged.

Adult members of disadvantaged families realized that their employment opportunities are limited because of their lack of education. Parents expressed a deep concern for their children and their future. They wanted their children to stay in school and prepare for an occupation that will afford them a more desirable way of life. By demonstrating a sincere concern for the children of the rural disadvantaged, a local educator shares a mutual interest with parents that may be valuable in gaining the support and cooperation of adult family members. Educational activities based around career choice for children, education and training required for job entry, and sources of occupational training serve effectively in gaining the attention of both children and adults.

Rural youth are frequently competing with urban youth when they seek jobs. Without entry qualifications, a rural youth has an obvious employment handicap. Youth must be encouraged to enroll in training programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels that will equip them with skills that will make them appealing to prospective employers. Pre-vocational education activities should be developed that will make students and their parents aware of the jobs that are available and the occupational training needed to gain entry into these jobs.

The REDY Educational Program, which focused on the needs of youth, served effectively as a vehicle to reach a small segment of the disadvantaged rural families in Illinois. The warm response given by the majority of participating families to the sincere interest shown in them by the local educator indicated that rural disadvantaged

families wanted and needed assistance. With proper motivation and a personalized educational program, many rural disadvantaged family members may establish realistic educational and occupational goals and take action to accomplish these goals as a means of breaking out of the chains of poverty.

Based on the findings of this study, the following statements appear worthy of consideration by educators and others who are responsible for developing educational and community action programs for the socially and economically disadvantaged:

1. Socially and economically disadvantaged families can be identified in a geographical area, their characteristics and needs determined, and educational programs developed that are responsive to the needs of individuals.

2. When teaching adults and children who are disadvantaged, the educator should plan a program that gives primary attention to the needs of his students.

3. The formerly unreachable severely disadvantaged families can be motivated to improve their social and economic situation through a sincere interest in the future of their children.

4. Educational programs that will acquaint the disadvantaged with the world of work, jobs available, nature of the work, and training required, are needed by children and parents alike.

5. The disadvantaged can be motivated by the use of "goal seeking" techniques; however, the goals must be molecular and not global in nature.

6. Disadvantaged people are aware of their problems, but desperately need a systematic approach to their solution.

7. Effective education for the disadvantaged requires personalized instruction. Individuals living in a depressed area require constant reinforcements if they are to continue action to accomplish goals established and improve their situation.

8. Since some families cherish living in the rural environment, upgrading and retraining for adults must be provided for occupations available within the community.

9. The needs of disadvantaged families make them very responsive to education related to family financial management, family goals, and the choice-making process as it pertains to consumer goods and services.

10. The vocationally oriented, family centered educational program developed and evaluated in this research project has potential use, in whole or in part, in rural and urban areas that have a concentration of disadvantaged families.

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